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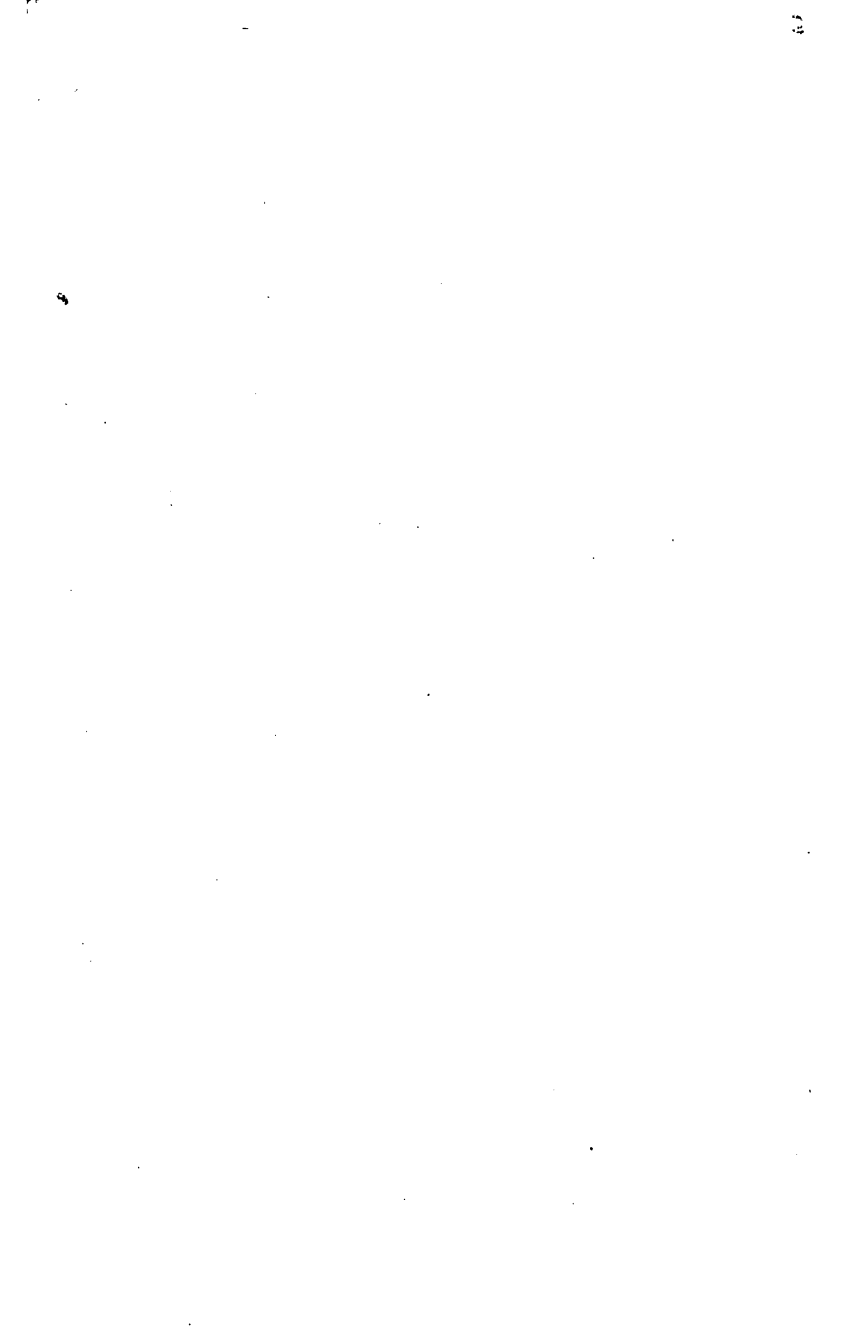
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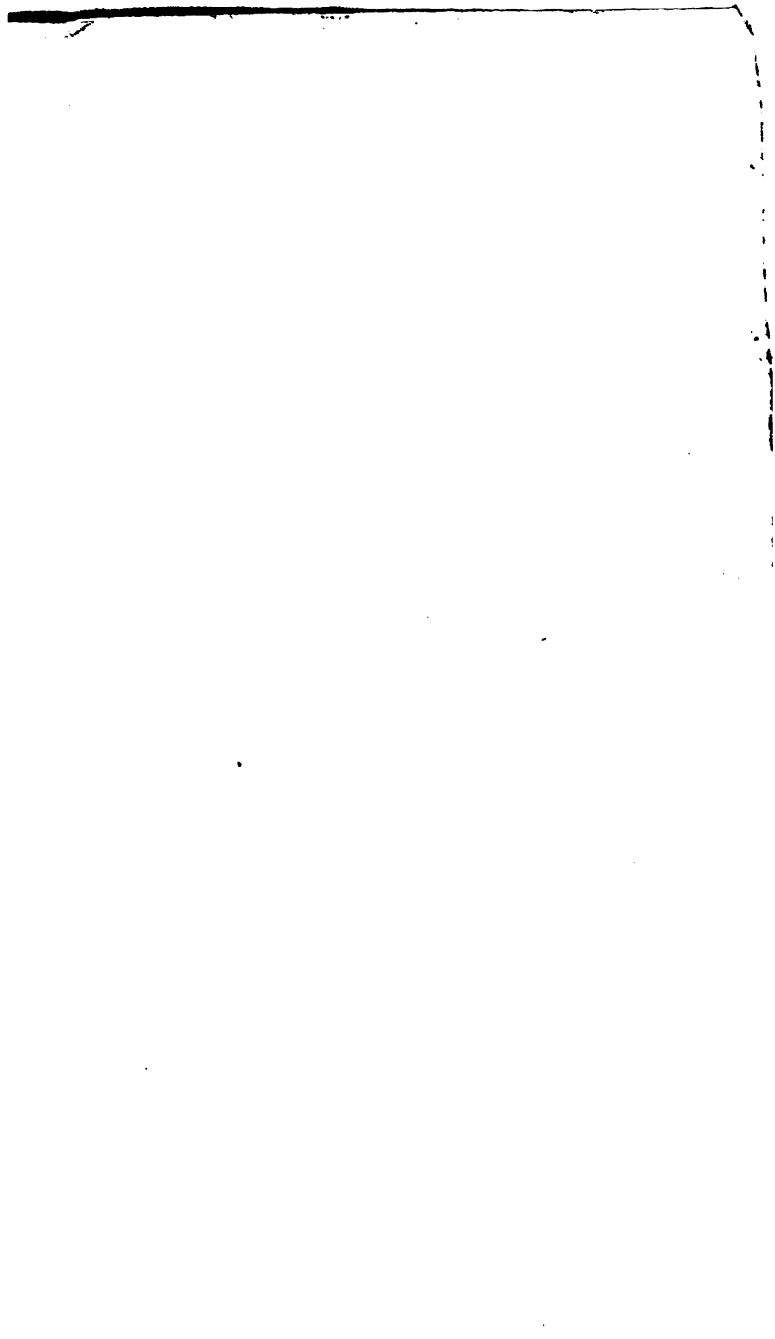
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O, it is such a
beautiful thing
just to be glad! I
Yours Willis Linn.



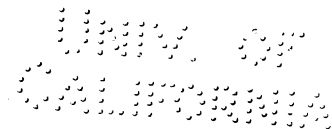
A CYCLE OF SONNETS



A Cycle of Sonnets

By

EDITH WILLIS LINN



NEW YORK

JAMES T. WHITE & CO.

1918

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1917



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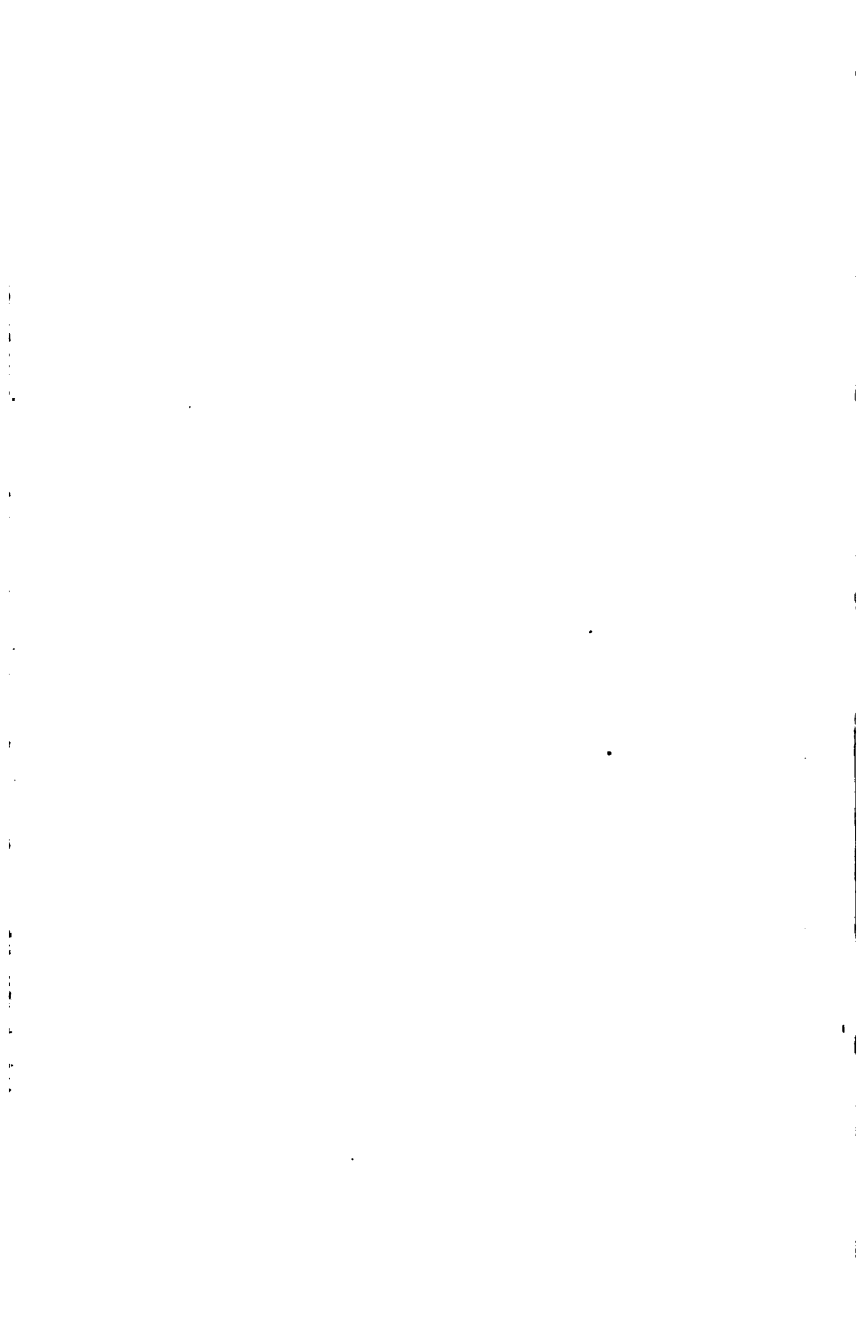
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To
A LOVER OF POETRY
WHO HELD
THE SONNET ABOVE ALL OTHER FORMS OF VERSE
SUMNER ROBINSON
A BEAUTIFUL MEMORY

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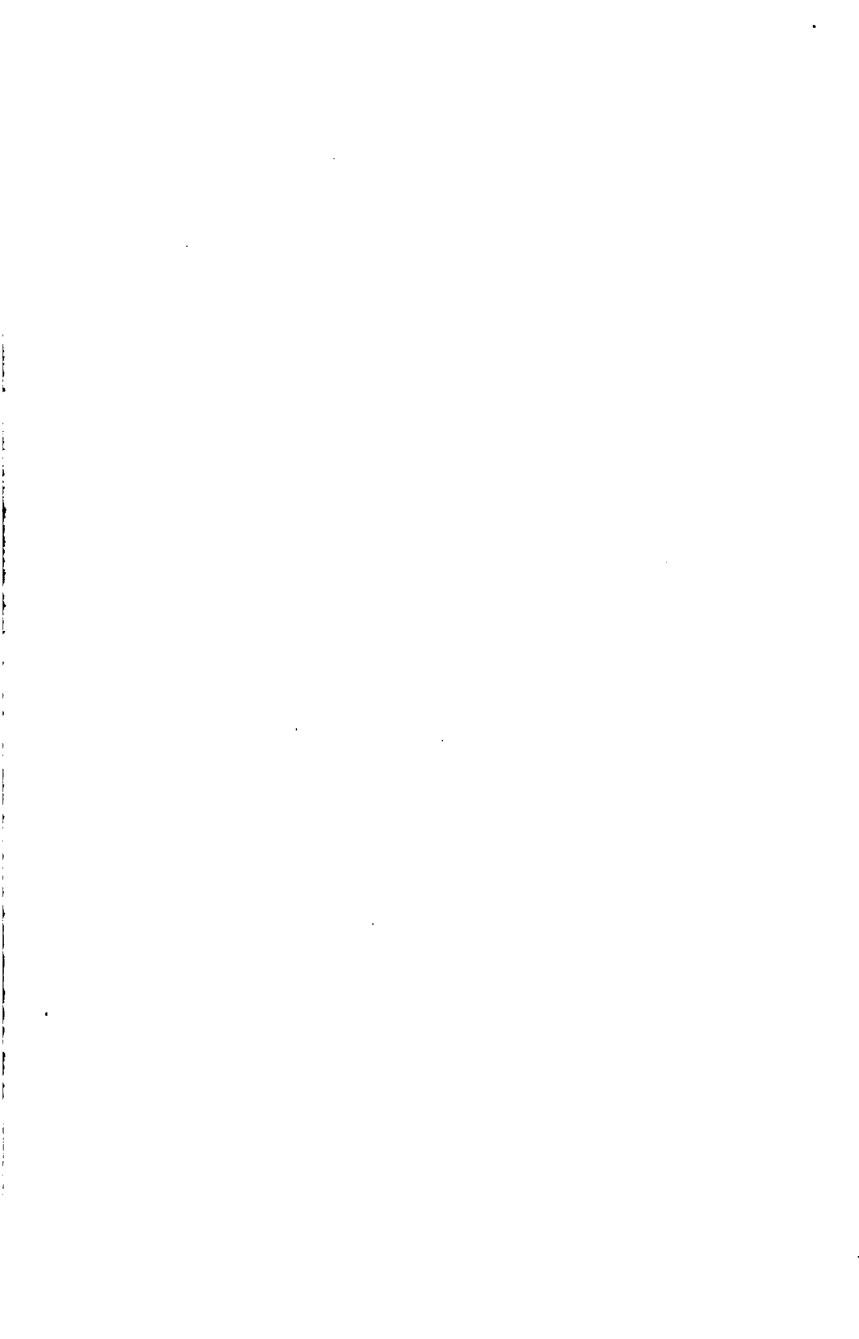


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BESIDE LAKE SENECA





BESIDE LAKE SENECA

L

THE cadence of thy waves like human pain,
Some deep, unconquered pang that stabs the heart,
Rises and falls. When somnolent thou art,
Bird-music soaring over thy refrain,
Summer's effulgence, or the windless rain,
Woo to forgetfulness; as poignant smart
Of recollection sinks to music's part,
And steals like old, sweet songs, across the brain.
When boisterous winds upon the fretted shore
Beat the deep fugue of thy tempestuous wave,
Above all thought, all action, sounds the roar;
So haunting memory, however brave
The heart, from calm returneth evermore
To sob its measure, sadder than the grave.

II.

EACH shining constellation overhead
Is clearly mirrored in translucent deeps.
Storm-mists, the rain, and restless wind that sweeps
To noisy waves are all upgatheréd.
Beyond the stars, by love and longing led,
My soul is seeking what the silence keeps.
Dear one, who neither tarries here nor sleeps
In low green tent, I know you are not dead.
Unwimpled lake encompassing the sky,
I would be calm that heaven reflected be
Within my heart as star for star is given.
O silent lake, I put my moaning by,
My rain of tears; teach me to know with thee
That perfect peace that in itself is heaven!

III.

UPON the sand the lispings run
Like tripping children prattling at their play.
Tranquil thy breast, all motionless and gray
Beneath a fumid sky, till the low sun
Flashes the message that its work is done.
Then flames thy face with memories of day
That comes no more, whose happy, futile way
Beside thy water is so soon outrun.
Ah, day with love and labor in thy hand!
Well-rounded day that seemed so full, so fair!
Chimeric opalescence, faint and far,
Receding like these ripples on the sand;
Darkness engulfs thee; labor, longing, care,
Sink to oblivion; overhead a star.

IV.

LEAPING and bounding into clouds of spray
On paleolithic cliffs, thou hast no power
To move the sighing, singing pines that tower
Against the blue, nor bid the woodthrush stay
His song. Beating the crags in boisterous play,
Canst thou imperil drooping fern or flower?
The law that marks each star's allotted hour
Limits thy might and holds thee in its sway.
I chafe beneath the narrowness called fate.
Like thee my turbulence makes fretful moan;
Grim grief encloses with its walls of gray.
I mount toward flower and song; the desolate
Reaches of shale are mine. Like thee I own
The power that limits my appointed way.

V.

FAREWELL, beloved, wheresoe'er I stray
Abides thy memory. Forever near
Thy murmurous melody. In dreams I hear
Thy tempest's fury and the waves at play.
Often upon the city's populous way
The rush and roar of traffic to my ear
Speaks in thy voice. In babbling crowds the cheer
Of wind-swept waves laughs into bounding spray.
Kind recollections, myriad phantoms, show
Life's ancient, vanished but immortal hour
Secure beyond effacement of our tears;
These haunt me. Often, Seneca, I know
Youth and its passionate dream, its faith, its power,
Borne by thy music backward through the years.

VI.

THE sun goes down in waves of crimson fire
Behind the city chimneys that arise
Grim, fumid specters in the western skies,
Whose breath, incarnadined, mounts ever higher.
My lake! my hills! land of my hearts desire,
Diaphanous opalescence shining lies
Upon thee as yon splendid sunset dies
In beauty that might prophet soul inspire.
Thou art like love, O country of my dreams!
Drawing the lovers' thought through time and space.
The city here; there the still glen, the pine;
The mellow music of the limpid stream;
While with the beauty of a long lost face
Outspreads the lake mid rimming hills a-shine.

VII.

WAKEFUL, O restless lake, I lie by thee,
Sobbing and sighing on the southern shore,
Through the autumnal darkness evermore
Calling of love—love lost eternally—
That seemed to die yet will not silent be.
At setting sun, when shadow-urns out-pour
The stars upon the sky, and o'er and o'er
The mournful crickets chirp persistently,
A haunting presence enters softly in,
And tender-eyed and speechless, pleads and grieves.
My little restless love, I thought thee dead!
Why come, sweet wanderer, footsore, wan and thin
From long neglect? Amid the fallen leaves
Why call to me of summer that is sped?

VIII.

HOW calm thou art, while in thy bosom dwell
Sad secrets of disaster, death and doom;
Blanched bones and sunken ships stark in the gloom
Of viscous caverns. Every crested swell
Murmurs of Indian tribes that loved thee well.
From thy translucent depths resounds the boom
Of that intrepid chief who dared presume
God's works, to find on thee his floating hell.*
Here on this gray slate stone a name I trace
And cast it forth into thy tranquil heart,
Thy perfect power of secrecy to prove.
Remorseless waves will soon the scroll efface,
As death and change forever set apart;
Yet hold it fast—the name of one I love.

*The legend of Seneca Lake.

IX.

QUITE motionless, the waveless waters lay,
Wooing the sky to their placidity;
Rock, tree and flower, repeated sinuously,
Doubled the beauty of each cove and bay.
Stealing through the lethargic, purple-gray
Of twilight came the friendly stars to see
Their images in that tranquility—
So dark and deep by night, so bright by day.
Love figures such a scene, reflected lies
Another's being on the sentient heart;
Dim, beatific visions swim in view;
Heaven seems about us like bemirrored skies;
From unknown depths resplendent worlds upstart;
And when love prays, it is the prayer of two.

X

THE violet light of dying day is thrown
Upon the eastern slopes that glow and gleam
Unreal, ethereal, like the banks of dream.
Against the lateral of lichenèd stone
Reflecting waters beat an undertone
To the soft purling of the distant stream,
And sentinal pines whose branches ever seem
To sigh, "I am alone, I am alone."
My friend, with whom I walked here, hand in hand,
Who knew my faltering step, my leading star,
Who lived my heart-break, grasped my ecstasy,
The hills of dream fade to the common land.
I move alone through paths crepuscular—
Dear heart, remember me, remember me.

XI.

WOULD that my life might be like this glen stream
That from an unknown upland takes its way!
By flowery meadows tempted not to stray,
By rugged rock-bed pausing not to dream,
But hastening ever where the blue waves gleam
To open water, to the fuller day;
Onward and outward, till it wears away
Imprisoning walls, however fair they seem.
My heart turns backward where the flowers were sweet,
Upon its rugged pathway sinks afraid.
Consider, Lord, thy child, alone, dismayed;
By trust and faith make confident my feet.
Reveal, as I pass on through dark or bright,
The far, fair waters calling out of sight.

XII.

A CROSS the hills, in vivid autumn trod,
Where sodden leaves and slinging snows have lain,
Bare-footed April tips her urn of rain
And sudden greenness sweeps along the sod.
Where lovers strayed the newly wakened clod,
Remembering their passion, peace and pain—
Remembering their rapture—will attain
To violet, eglantine and goldenrod.
Nature responds to every mood of man,
Her earth-song lulls him to his one true rest;
Incorporate in her diurnal plan,
He climbs through fire and crystal on his quest.
By lovers' footsteps thrilled, her tender powers
Compel insensate dust to rise in flowers.

XIII.

APRIL RAIN. I.

DRY, unawakened woods, beneath my feet
Marasmas leaves, a-rustle drearily,
Confess your nakedness. As wearily,
Listening the minor monotones of sweet
Old runes the hemlocks to the pines repeat,
You hide the sesame—the mystery
Of dim withholding—potent history
Of waiting—in each mossy, shy retreat.
Diaphanous shadows that the bare boughs make,
Betraying latent longings of the sod;
Still somnolent, grey isles yearning to break
In bloodroot, trillium and prophets rod,
You teach the heart, weeping a secret pain,
The deep significance of April rain.

XIV.

APRIL RAIN. II.

THE ovenbird reports to us again;
Along the cliff, beneath the pine, his call
Resounds; he nods and bobs beside the fall
Shrunken with arid longings. 'Tis the rain
He prophesies in language loud and plain.
As if at his insistence, over all
Eolus breathes and like a funeral pall
Descend the shadows; as quick tears to pain
The warm drops patter, patter on the sod.
How sweet the scent of the moist, breaking soil!
Gladly the fern fronds from their sleep uncoil,
And dim, far hills lift thirsting lips to God;
While all that myriad life, withheld from sight,
Moves slowly upward as a soul seeks light.

XV.

APRIL RAIN. III.

PERSISTENTLY the rain fell through the night;
I could not sleep for the incessant roar,
As chafed the troubled lake upon the shore
And the great cataract clamoured for the light.
When morning dawned, what wonders meet the sight!
A tremulous green where all was gray before;
The woods seemed all astir. I, evermore,
Seeking departed joy, a lost delight,
Strayed mid the fallen leaves of other years
And found the shrine where, timid nuns at prayer,
The shy, gray-hooded liverwort uprears
Its azure chalice to the genial air.
Child of the dreary rain, lo! April stands
With the whole wealth of summer in her hands.

XVI.

LIKE a gray nun who treads on silent feet,
The dawn creeps slowly, in her hand a star;
The forest throws her dusky gates ajar;
Her murmurous responses, low and sweet,
Fill cloistered columns of tenebrous trees
Whose wavering shadows scatter fast and far,
As when a kindly hand the gates unbar
To let the convent sheep across the leas.
Above orchestral branches, borne along
The morning air, like ocean's lambent swell,
Clear as the vibrant peal of convent bell,
The whitethroat chants anew his matin song,
So sweet, so sad, so joyous, wild and strong;
Repeats, "All, all is well, is well, is well."

XVII.

THE city streets recede, its noises cease;
Forgot the surging crowd's tumultuous flow;
Again where autumn's mellow breezes blow
Through spicy branches of great hemlock trees,
Along the cowpaths, stretching out in peace
To sheer, gray cliffs where, beating far below,
The foam-flecked lake restlessly to and fro
Repeats the north wind's murmurous melodies,
I walk beside thee, dreaming, hand in hand,
Through the brown pasture, in the sunset glow.
Turn thy fond thoughts from thy great city's glare,
To meet mine where stellated hazel-wand
Points past the dreary winter's ice and snow
To hours that wait us on those hills of prayer.

XVIII.

A BLUEBIRD carols his immortal song
Beneath torn shreds of blue Aprilian sky;
At the glad sound across the inward eye
Forgotten raptures that to youth belong—
Lost love, keen joy, firm faith with scorn of wrong—
Flash into being. Where the sunbeams lie
On pearled arbutus flower, by cataract high
And foaming, 'neath the pine changeless and strong,
That whispers to the leaping stream below,
Again I stray, love-dowered, unmarred by care
And memories that sting like bitter pain.
The city streets withdraw; once more I know
Glad childhood's aspiration, fancy, prayer,
In the blithe song the bluebird sings to me.

XIX.

THE gray glen shoulder gloomed the sunset light,
Till from its summit, where I paused to rest,
The mighty, smouldering ember of the West,
With Venus, burning spark-like, flamed in sight.
The lake with violet, rose and gold bedight,
Burned to dull ash; from vale and misty crest,
Dreamily limned in palest amethyst,
Far cottage windows twinkled through the night.
Silence on all the scene—silence that came
Brooding on wings of darkness, till my heart
Broke with a longing that would not be still.
I called thee, dear, striving to make thee part
Of time and place; I called aloud thy name
As the great moon flamed crimson o'er the hill.

XX.

THE sapphire lake with whitecaps was befoamed;
O'er dappled skies the clouds were all a-sail;
Bright leaves before the south's impetuous gale
Swept the October roadways where we roamed.
Glad rang our laughter as we saw the gold
Of autumn berries crown a tangled hedge,
And pulled them downward from their rocky ledge
To cheer us through the coming months of cold.
Dear friend, though cities claim us for their own,
Still ours that morning glad with wind and sun.
Our happy days together are outrun,
For we pursue our separate ways alone.
O blessed days, in memory's calm retreat
Perpetuate! Love knows its bittersweet.

XXI.

TRANSLUCENT mists, in sinuous masses lying
On distant hill and lake and leaping stream,
Are symbols of the inner world of dream
Whence visioned images, illusive, flying,
On sensuous winds from realms beyond descrying
Move through our common day and ever seem
To beckon—loyalties and faiths that gleam
And fade before the world's impassioned sighing.
O half-remembered, far off, vanished hour!
Old love and war and triumph that were mine!
Lend to this moment's ever-doubtful power
The largess of high purposes of thine.
Dream mists, enwrap the present with your grace
And make ethereal all earth's commonplace.

XXII.

CLEMATIS vines their snowy petals shed,
Mellifluous as the roses Hafiz knew.
The ardent moon, across abysmal blue,
Bends o'er the lake—a virgin in her bed.
On such a night, dear heart, thy pillowed head
Lay for a moment on my breast. I knew
Thy beckoning lips' erotic breath that drew
Hymeneal kisses warm as vintage red.
O night of passion, passed to come no more!
Desire burnt into the heart's last beat!
Gone as estival birds to south land flown.
Hark, where the lake upon its shingly shore
Chants its placebo, murmurously sweet,
To silent loneliness and summer flown!

XXIII.

AUTUMNAL pools that knew the Spring's full flood,
The bright cerule of laughing summer skies,
Droned over by the darting dragonflies,
Sung over by the veery's happy brood,
Incarnadined by rich October's wood,
Whitened when wintry vapors crystallize,
Half in expectancy, half in surprise,
I see myself reflected in your mood.
Gray eyes, so dear to me—grown doubly dear
In absence—you are like this morroring deep
Where things exalted and ecstatic sleep.
When isolation and sere age draw near,
Reflect my love, my song of longing hear,
And in your depths my image constant keep.

XXIV.

MY heart is like this nest, this empty one,
Where clematic petals pour their pearly spray—
A cataract, a frozen roundelay—
Mist-wreathéd drops imprisoned by the sun.
Yon tired streamlet shrivels in its run;
The silent bittern stalks his watery prey;
The hills in hazy beauty stretch away—
Dream-hills that blush to tell the day is done.
The crimson bough, where autumn breaks her heart
Upon the dying year, lets slowly fall
Its ruddy drops like tears of blood. The call
Of the great lake upon outlying bars
Is like a sob. Lest pain should kill, depart,
O memory. Holy night, reveal thy stars!

XXV.

THE aspiring vine its crimson chalice spills;
Like moslem priests in minarets of prayer,
Late bees in towering shafts of bloom declare
Their droning benediction; silence fills
The forest choir; the bare fields' even drills—
Calm shadowy aisles—receive the farmer's care;
The bonfire breathes its incense on the air,
The corn is cloistered on the peaceful hills;
Now rings the vesper of the homing crows, **ff**
Whose restless tide, a stygian river, flows
Across the sky; beneath the stable eaves
The winter wren his tiny bugle blows;
At night the downy owlet pleads and grieves
And sobs his heart out to the falling leaves.

XXVI.

A MID September's tented corn I lie,
The lake's unrippled purple spread below,
Where vast cloud-navies, drifting to and fro,
Mimic the pageant of the threatening sky.
O'er distant hills in dark immensity
Grim shadow-armies pass; on winds that blow
From unknown, sinuous savannas, lo!
A gull in ghostly silence tilting by.
Herald of conquering autumn, when I see
Thine errant wing athwart the azure field,
The goldenrod's bright ranks of yellow yield;
The dying vine hangs bleeding on the tree;
And from the forest's ancient wall, behold,
Autumnal banners—crimson edged with gold!

XXVII.

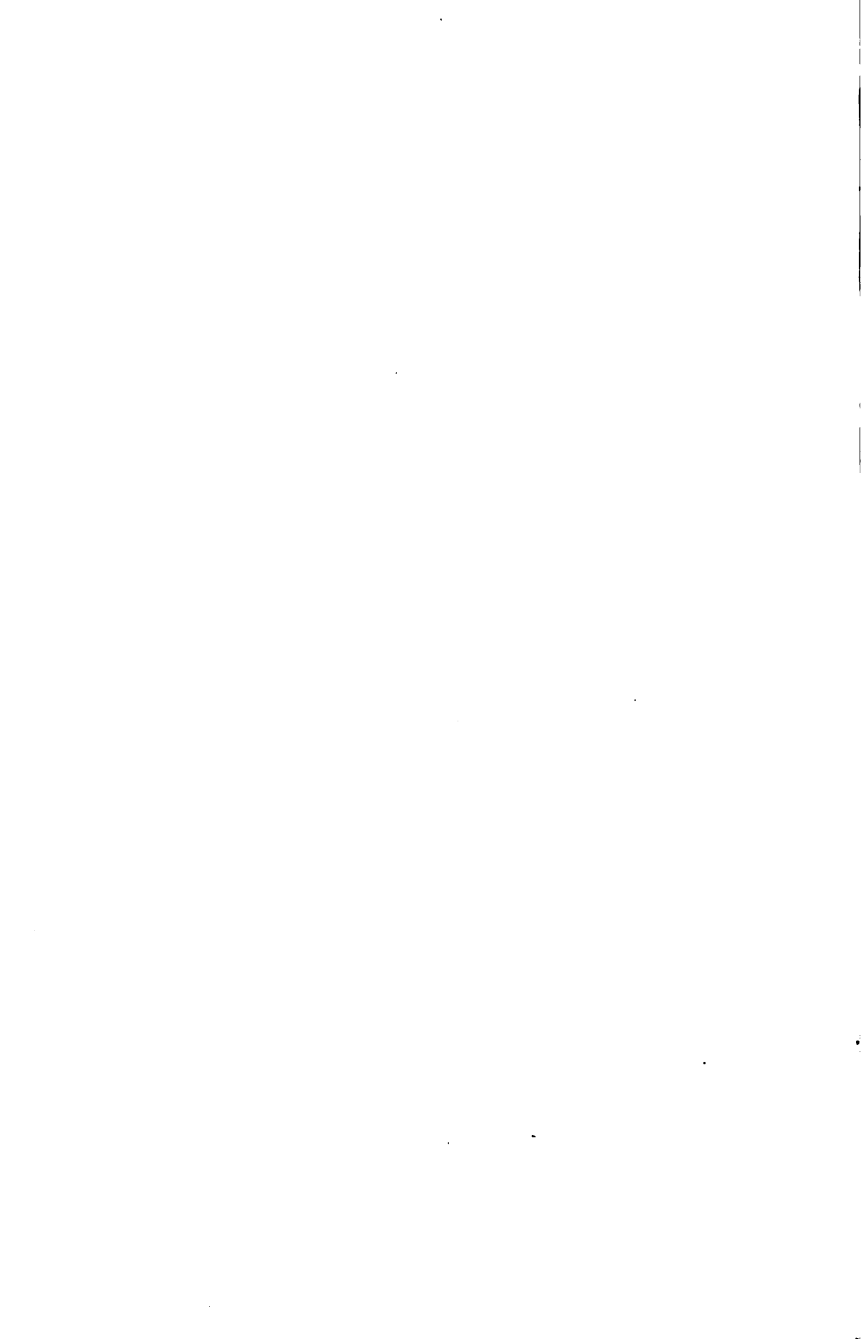
SUNLIGHT and shadow on the hills of dream,
Like memory, weave a web of dark and bright.
Pearly and opalescent falls the light
On halcyon lake, gray cliff and leaping stream.
Along the eastern ridge farm windows gleam
Like tremulous tapers set against the night,
As the fast westering sun, sinking from sight,
Shoots through the autumn haze its crimson beam.
The snowy gull aspires on ruddy wings;
The clanging crows in solemn phalanx come;
A sparrow, dreaming of his vanished springs,
Sweet snatch of half-remembered rapture sings,
While through the shadowy purple of the gloam
A distant bleating tells of fold and home.

XXVIII.

THE COUNTRY HOUSE IN NOVEMBER

CLOSED are its eyes, its gabled wings seem furled;
Its looming tower a specter gaunt and tall;
Its chimneys 'gainst the gray cliff's glooming wall,
Bereft of filmy smoke-robcs once upcurled
From happy hearths, frown naked on the world.
Moody November skies brood over all,
Heavy and vaporless; dead vines, that sprawl
The trellis, yield a flora frost-impearled.
Enter! The melancholly halls none tread;
The stairs creak echoes of far distant feet;
Draped couch and chair stand ghostly; and above,
In the dim chamber, the dismantled bed
Like a white altar rises; dear retreat
Of dreams, of aspiration, sleep and love.

LOVE SONNETS



I.

SO long since you departed! Once again
The sunset flames. The ancient host of stars—
Twilighted Venus, dawn's imperial Mars—
Have treked across the heaven's westering plain;
The giant Sun leads forth his splendid train.
One brief, bright day! And tidal years shall flow
Between us; summer roses, autumn glow,
The harvest-shrouding snow and April rain!
Will you remember? Lo! the shadows fall,
The sunset's luminosity is spent.
My thoughts go wandering upward, like a star,
Unto dim unknown worlds, remote and far.
Oh, shall we meet beyond that shrouded tent
Where darkness, sleep and silence roundeth all?

II.

MY tiny lute hath such a tremulous string,
Too small, too weak, to chant love's mighty song;
Sometimes I feel I only do thee wrong,
Dear heart, when impotently thus I sing.
Yet, day by day, persistently I bring
The tribute of my melody; prolong
My singing till the stars, grown calm and strong,
Hear the earth-old, immortal music ring.
Dost weary grow of this dull chant of mine?
This all-persistent, contumacious strain?
Oh! should this throbbing, vibrant little lute
Break with the burden of its theme divine,
Fall insufficient, would some sweet refrain
Breathe on in memory, though life's chord be mute?

III.

ISLANDS in far cerulean seas a-dream,
Gay Faunus to your shadowy retreat
Invites the nymphs no more; no music sweet
Of reedy lute, no pallid Luna-beam
Falling on wind-tossed hair and eyes a-gleam,
Woo to mad joys, intangible and fleet;
Great pagan Pan is dead; our pilgrim feet
Seek vainly by Ionian grove and stream.
Yet when the sun encrimsons sky and sea,
Our fresh, new world blushing incarnadine,
A bright, illusive spirit walks with me.
Beloved Faun, round life's Dryadic tree
Weaving that wierd, alchemic spell of thine,
Breath on thy lute and bid grim sorrow flee.

IV.

BELOVÉD, I have often heard thee say
Thy life was small account in field or mart,
Thy hand refused to answer to thy heart,
Vain, idle, useless, seemed thine earthly way.
Consider what I tell thee—day by day
I wake to joy because I know thou art,
Thy life in every act of mine hath part,
Thou art in all I do or dream or pray.
Is it of little value thus to bring
Another's life some purpose high and pure?
What ocean argosy or wealth of mine
Can weigh in balance with so blest a thing?
Such gift of spirit shall through time endure
And afterward in heaven make me thine.

V.

I LIFT my heart that thou mayst see the light
Glint through the wine of love thy hand hath poured.
As comrades gather round the festal board
To pledge good cheer with mirth and music bright,
I stepped from out the shadow of the night
Where I have tarried with my sorry hoard
Of pain and tears. Now let thy heart accord
That courtesy that is the stranger's right.
Yea, I am stranger to such joy, dear heart!
How came I by this precious wealth of wine?—
I on whose brow the years have left their dole.
Come, let me pledge thee, lest I should depart
Fearing to harm thy life with love of mine.
Look in my eyes and let me drink thy soul.

VI.

OFTEN the thought, "I will not love him so,"
Sends me to seek my duty or my play.

I bar the door of memory, turn away
All resolute. I hasten to and fro
Mid friends and old associates and show
A smiling face, a merry mood. I say,
"Lo! now I do not need him; every day
My individual life shall stronger grow
Till brave, content, I walk my way apart."
Then suddenly, as on a winter night
When passing near a church where people sing,
One sees the great doors on their hinges swing,
Light, beauty, music, greet the ear, the sight:
I am with thee and cling about thy heart.

VII.

A POET you are though never from your pen
Falleth a line to move the heart to tears,
Inspire to finer action, cheat of fears,
Or soothe to peace the restless minds of men.
Dear poet soul, my inspiration! when
Existence wearies 'neath the ache of years;
When desolated, lonely, my life hears
You call to action, I revive again.
What means this purpose of existence, dear,
This power to ennoble, to exalt?
Should love be hope to live by; memory,
A warm, close presence; an inspiring thought?
Teach me your spirit's lore, your wish narrate,
Let me interpret and perpetuate.

VIII.

COME, let me love thee in the old, sweet way,
Thy dear head, pillowed on my outstretched arm,
Thy cheek against my bosom. Starry calm
Of amorous night, sinking in seas of gray,
Departs with dreams. Morn's all-compellent ray
Wakens to action, dissipates the charm
That cheats my loneliness, lethargic balm,
The wile of sorrow, old as night and day.
Beloved thou art far, yet near to me,
If through unpeopled space our thoughts have flown,
Claiming each other. Ages since, we lay
Together in the dawn. Now let us be
In thought as rose leaves ere the rose is blown;
Come, let me love thee in the old, sweet way.

IX.

O, Love, let us be true! life's brief, love rare;
The sea towards which we journey, that we hear
Faintly in childhood, hour by hour draws near;
Its solitary vastness each must dare
Alone; what matters all our heaped-up care,
Our restlessness, ambition, selfish fear
Lest others win, when o'er that darkling mere
To an unspoken port we must repair?
Earth has so little really worth our while;
Her baubles flash and shatter in our hand;
Sin beckons and we laughingly pursue
To find the skeleton behind the smile;
And ever nearer on its fretted sand
Beats the vast sea—O Love, let us be true!

X.

IF I should fall asleep, to wake no more,
And you should look upon my dreamless face,
Discover death had power to erase
The lines that time's erosive finger wore;
If, mid the tributes of the love men bore,
You saw my folded hands and knew the race
Was won and mine the happy victor's place;
Would you desire that heaven my life restore?
Had you the power of him of old to raise
Life in the lifeless, would you touch my eyes,
Bidding them open to the sun and rain?
Take my cold hand to feel its pulses rise?
Call me across the starlit, heavenly ways
That we might laugh and weep and kiss again?

XI.

A PLEACHÉD garden seemed thy quiet love,
A trellised, rose-hung nook where shadows stray
In pencilled patterns, where Time's gnomon gray
Marks only sunny hours. Behold! I rove
Through a vast realm where gods and demons move
Contending; where dim vistas bid me stray;
Where service waits; high vision calls away.
I could not turn me back howe'er I strove.
Red rose of passion, bend thy blooms to me!
Lily of love, thy flavous stamens show!
The dusty highway and the wicket gate
Forgotten now, since I abide with thee.
Lead thou me on until I come to know
Peace, that shall be with love commensurate.

XII.

THE flowers are dead, the bird no longer sings;
They know the hour has struck their time to go;
Now winter creeps upon us sure and slow,
As a gaunt wolf that pauses ere he springs;
Soon you, belovéd, will be far away
From trusting hearts that count you all their own.
The snow and frost of absence, all unknown
To joy, will drift through life's inclement day.
Through winter solstice will you hearken, dear,
For the first wilding's matin song of Spring?
Be constant to love's fond remembering?
Know memory's estival throughout the year?
So only can I make this love of ours
Break into song and blossom into flowers.

XIII.

WHEN we together lived those halcyon days
That now are memory, Joy and I were kin.
She dwelt beneath my thatch, she sang therein
With sweet insistency; the woodland ways,
The haunts of men were tuneful with her lays,
The unattainable was mine to win;
She lit the commonplace of life; within,
My heart invoked forgotten prayer and praise.
Absent from thee, another chants her songs
Beside my hearth, I have grown kin to pain.
Each life that suffers unto me belongs,
No tear drop falls, no anguish calls in vain.
Because of thee, O love, my spirit knows
The height of joy, the depth of human woes.

XIV.

DID we not stand in love's supremest light?
Know all of bliss, all love's sweet lore can say?
We may not on the summit always stay,
The gates of heaven open to the sight.
Nay, my belovéd, better from the height
Descend our separate paths than, day by day,
Feel the dull commonplace corrode away
Love's dear perfection or the less requite
Our longing for infinitude. To know
All that there is to know of love is well.
The soul grows saintlier through such blessed gain.
Come let us kiss and part while loving so;
The height is ours, love has no more to tell—
And take our separate pathway to the plain.

XV.

LAST night I saw the star Capella glow,
Autumnal star that ages hence shall rise
Beyond the eastern hill, from storm-tossed skies
Shining resplendent over stretching snow.
And I, who watched it gleam and shimmer so,
Found dimming tears steal from my upturned eyes,
Remembering my hours in paradise
Where misty, starlit waters ebb and flow.
Remote, insentient world, whirling afar!
Forever shedding through vast space thy ray!
Love issuing from God his brightest star
Outshineth, orbed in everlasting day;
Space dims it not, it never waxeth old;
We shall love on when yonder star grows cold.

XVI.

ALL bright, external things corrode and fade,
As roses of the summer, as the grass
On which our June-glad feet are gay to pass;
Bird-song to silence sinks, sunshine to shade.
Corporeal love that for a little made
A garden of the heart, how soon, alas!
Memory repeats its age-old requiem mass
To joys outlived, to withered garlands laid!
Yet something back of love's beseeching eyes
Teaches the spirit wisdom; there I see
A quality that changes not nor dies,
Though lives be sundered. I shall bear with me
Across death's portal and beyond the skies
Love's great unnamed, immortal mystery.

XVII.

AS those who hear death's all-compelling wings
Pause in the darkness, I have come to know
The pain of those who listen to the low
Murmur of that vast sea, whose ebbing brings
No answering moan; the sea that ever sings
Of joys outgone. To love, to want thee so,
And nevermore to see thee, never go
And take thy hand in mine! Death's shadow flings
No blacker pall of silence, than must fall
Between us, dear. Yet, as we hope to meet
Our loved ones after life's brief course is run,
I feel that love's great angel will recall
Me to his presence, and at his calm feet
We shall bow down together and be one.

XVIII.

LOVE is not fixed, it ebbs and flows, a sea;
A melody; a river from some height
Unknown, unguessed, whose source is hid in light
Silent the singer—hushed the melody.
The river's pearl, the ocean's argosy,
Save for the diver, slumbers out of sight,
Save for the sailor, yields us no delight.
Love was, love is, alas! love may not be.
For love is won only by lovingness;
Each morning we must win its shining dole;
Each night its wealth of tenderness express—
The blessed barter of the mind and soul.
Who would his rightful dower of love retain
Must win that love again and yet again.

XIX.

THE day is over, every duty done,
Each sacrifice achieved, each promise filled;
The lights are out, the busy house is stilled;
Along the orbit of the hurrying sun
The pensive, silent, tender stars have won
Their place; with rapture is my spirit thrilled;
Pain, pride, the passion of a heart self-willed,
Forgotten—since at last I am alone.
Groping by hidden panel, secret stair,
By shaded lane, by daisy-whitened lea;
Under May's blossom bough, to valleys where
The flowers that I have lost are kept for me;
By lonely paths that only love would dare
My soul steals forth to keep its tryst with thee.

XX.

ONCE came the angel with the flaming face,
Discovered us, half strangers, in the night,
Vibrant beneath the moon's illusive light,
With mighty primal passions of our race,
Drawn planet-like through intervening space
By God's attractive law. Resistless might,
Archical, sweeping from bewildered sight
Old landmarks and the bonds of time and place.
Yet Eros rules the soul by higher power
Than sensuousness; within the human heart
The spirit puts the meaner lusts to shame.
I love thee—love thee better, hour by hour;
Through these mute pauses, when we dwell apart,
God's mightiest angel singeth through the flame.

XXI.

NOT yet the lips—not yet the clasping hand;
Let me drink in thy being, let thy face
False images of doubt and dread replace.
Like a pale anchorite I dumbly stand
Before an altar, waiting the command
To light the holy candles and efface
The gloom descending on the cup and vase,
Awed by a power I may not understand.
In thy return love's eucharist I know;
Thy spirit cloisters in my waiting heart,
Where hovering like John's dove, all angel-white,
Love greets the dawning of the perfect light.
Bread of thy presence to my life bestow;
Wine of communion to my soul impart.

XXII.

“**L**OVE, I would climb no farther than I may,”
My laggard spirit cried, and Love dropped down
Beside my tent, with harp and laurel crown,
Waiting throughout the burden of the day.
When flaming sunset burned itself to gray,
And underfoot the fallen leaves grew brown
And sodden with the dew, I touched his gown,
His harp, his arrow: Love had flown away.
Then from above a voice celestial said:
“Who wins me never keeps me as a guest;
Imprison me, I fly; by day, by night
Follow my own, unwearied, unafraid.
I am the spirit of the eternal quest,
Luring the soul toward its shining height.”

XXIII.

THE chanting pines amid their choir of cones
Made musical the forest's cloistered way;
The stream sang round its boulder, lichen-gray,
Or lisped along its ledge in monotones.
Above the glen-cathedral's rocky zones
The evening star on faded roseleaves lay;
Afar we heard the lake's white fingers play
Adagios on its instrument of stones,
And dreamed the dream that is the heart of God.
Though dreams are ended, and the winter snows
Cover the flowers our careless footsteps trod,
Broken and dead, yet in the heart remains
The song as, when a singer silent grows,
The last low chord the melody sustains.

XXIV.

LOVE passed my way and kissed me as he flew—
Come back, sweet love, return on breath of May;
The cherry blossoms whiten on the spray,
The ploughshare turns the pregnant soil to view.
Sweet is the scent of the good earth, and true
Its promise. From my sorry heart astray,
Come, thou illusive love, thy roundelay
Sing, as the robin sings that builds anew.
Behold how free the ice-locked waters run!
Upon the ledges blooms the columbine;
The foaming rue runs riot in the sun;
The coral bud is on the eglantine.
My heart's delight, return and sing again,
Sing as sang Orpheus in the haunts of pain.

XXV.

PAN the mysterious, in a secret glade
Sleeps unattended, 'neath a runic stone;
And Eolus, with vernal breath, has blown
The snows away; the ghostly frosts are laid.
Come, let us seek him where the runlet made
A path of cowslip gold, or violets strown,
Like sapphires, make a worthy hillside throne,
Or 'neath the nascent leaves' uncertain shade.
Now earth is young, as when with mellow tone
His care-free pipes bade grass and flower arise,
And laughing wood-nymphs from his presence ran.
Haply this lichened boulder is his stone!
Friend of my heart, within thy quiet eyes
I look—and, lo! I hear the pipes of Pan.

XXVI.

A SINGING beggar, dost thou bid me go
Cease to rehearse this wonder-love of mine,
I who am all unworthy love like thine,
But, having loved, must ever love thee so?
Bereft of me, is it thy wish to know
Silence; within thy castle to confine
Thy spirit, sit alone and drink thy wine,
And all we dreamed together overthrow?
Wouldst have thy days as those before I came
Singing my love-song by thy postern gate?
Love's beggar, offering music for estate
Beside the master, singing in love's name?
Remembering how I loved thee—shall I lay
My harp across my shoulder and away?

XXVII.

I THOUGHT to hide my love with subtle art
Where none might guess its presence, none might see,
Only to find it where at dawn the bee
Sucks the pink lips of the wild rose apart,
To find her nectaries; where swallows dart
At twilight; in the bright transiliency
Of murmurous brooks; the lake's homophony;
In beauty's dream; in duty's aching heart.
Love is our patience with the wayward child,
The hand that reaches to the weak and lone;
The song of praise; the consecrated vow;
It lifts to God what earth had else defiled.
In deeps, in heights, it bids me seek my own,
And after death will lead me e'en as now.

XXVIII.

TIS evening; I have laid my work aside,
As all day long I thrust a thought from me
Unto life's outer verge—refused to see
That which in memory and dream abide;
Toiled in the commonplace unglorified
By life's best joy—the joy of loving thee;
Battened the door against the melody;
Trampled the vision lest my angel chide.
But now the after glow is on the hill;
The lake all opalescent as a shell,
Holding autumnal glory interwove
With its own azure; now my weary will,
A tired child, no longer need rebel,
Lying quiescent in encircling love.

XXIX.

O CAGÉD bird, that all-exultant sings
A song of sweet, forbidden minstrelsy!
Daily I fling the wicket wide to free
Thy eager eyes, thy ever-restless wings.
"Thou who art fit to be the gift of kings,
Go hence," I cry, "why tarry here with me"?
And evermore refusing liberty,
My prisoned songster's glad exuberance rings.
Sing on! Why should my spirit bid thee go?
All joys corporeal unto thee belong;
From thee men learn anew the Eden-song,
From thee God's heavenly language come to know.
Oh, sanctify my passion, lift my heart
Unto the realms supernal whence thou art!

XXX.

"YOU'LL never go so far I cannot find":

These words on memory's scroll are graven deep;
As children clasp some precious toy in sleep,
I to my heart the simple sentence bind.
Life is so like a sleep in which the mind
Wanders on restlessly from steep to steep,
Through dreary canyons wherein waters leap,
Through pleasant valleys wherein rivers wind;
So full of dream-shapes beckoning away,
So full of longings past the will's control.
In outward life of active, restive day,
Or in the silent night, my precious scroll
I closely bind against my heart and pray
To be content to love thus with the soul.

XXXI.

COLUMBUS sailing by the northern star
For oriental sea and unknown world,
His banner to the island sand unfurled,
Nor dreamed a mighty continent spread afar.
So I, when drifting through the darkling night,
Beheld the beacon of quiescent eyes,
Steered by their light and found my Paradise
Of love and peace, of happiness and light,
Dreamed it was but an island known before,
Small, circumscribed, yet lovely. Now I see
It was a mighty continent, for me
Illimitable, whose pre-visioned shore,
Bathed by the ocean of eternity,
Beckons me on to endless life with thee.

XXXII.

ANOTHER day spent far from thee, dear heart!
I used to count, as misers do their gold,
The glinting mornings and the nights that hold
Calm, starry wonder. The great world of art,
The nature world—bird-song and flowers that start
Like spirit faces from the field and wold—
These made my joy, and jealously I told
Each moment off, loath with my wealth to part.
Now I have grown a spendthrift, overbold
And lavish of my days. "Hasten," I cry
To morning and to night. Oh, let me be
Beggared of days, so only I behold
My feet approach the blessed place where I
Shall find my rapture and my rest in thee!

XXXIII.

WHEN thou shalt come and stand beside my bier
And look on her who loved thee to the last,
What wilt thou conjure from a vanished past
To counsel thee, to comfort, solace, cheer?
Canst thou remember what thou gav'st me, dear,
That blest me? Hold one self-less action fast
And say, "This made her happy?" Nay, recast
My life with thee? see where it falls—a tear!
Yet sorrow not, for it is my delight
To lavish love upon thee hour by hour;
Thy substance is too niggard to requite
Such largess; as God loves, so I love thee;
He proves himself in light, in song, in flower,
Giving—nor ever asking, "Lov'st thou me?"

XXXIV.

WHY should we sorrow at inconstancy?
Why fret because love may unworthy prove?
Borne on an ever-restless tide we move,
As ships upon an unpropitious sea.
Ours not to will. If potent destiny
Threw us together on a flowery spot,
A quiet island, dearest, blame me not
If I drank joy as sailors drink to be
Cured of a fever—pent in ships too long.
About us beats life's ocean, evermore
We fare upon it, spite of love or fear.
Time makes no shift to listen to love's song.
The tide ebbs out, why linger on the shore?
Remember only this—I loved thee, dear.

XXXV.

THAT slow and silent Power that hath wrought
From star-mist, dew, and fire, the circling spheres,
Conducting us across quiescent years,
Unto Itself our finite lives hath brought.
O lonely, silent way ere I was caught
Into the Presence; from repellent fears
Upborne; made to forget the use of tears;
A new heart-language by the spirit taught!
How many ages watched that brooding Love
Before a star broke from night's purple sky!
Souls that are used to wonder how and why—
So late, so long—turn trusting eyes above
And watch the stars. Belovéd, you and I
Shall live and love when these have ceased to move.

XXXVI.

MEN toil and barter for the ones they love,
Wrench the dark caverns of the earth for ore,
Tunnel the mountain, drain the seas, would pour
Old ocean from its hollow to remove
Coral and pearls and buried treasure-trove.
They herd and sow and reap, heap high their store;
If bought by blood and tears, then prized the more,
As deeper and more passionate pain they prove.
I have no power nor wish to gather pelf
In proof of love. In the gray dawn I wake,
To lift mine ancient burden for thy sake;
In thought of others seek to lose myself.
At night I glean my visions, hopes, and fears,
And lay them at thy feet;—forgive the tears.

XXXVII.

SILENCE has fallen over work and play;
A drowsy languor, like the noiseless wing
Of the brown owl in woods where veeries sing
Throughout the pageant of the summer day,
Descends upon me. All is still and gray
Where I am lying, as a child at rest
In clasping arms upon a mother's breast,
Waiting for thee to take my soul away
To misty, pathless deserts of deep sleep,
Leaving the useless waste of hours behind,
With thee a holy tryst of love to keep
In some bright star; our kindred dream to find;
Give all we have to give, each unto each,
And learn together all love hath to teach.

XXXVIII.

THOU art to me a solace, a release
From many jarring frictions of the world.
As men escape from devastation, hurled
From hidden guns, to find a transient peace
In darkened cellars till the horrors cease,
So I draw inward from life's maddening press,
Its clarion note, its turmoil and distress,
To find in thoughts of thee love's dear increase.
Here, in this inner sanctum, war is not;
Through silent dusk and webby shreds of dreams
Shine memories of consecrated hours
When we were straying by belovéd streams,
Among autumnal leaf and fading flowers,
In halcyon days that never are forgot.

XXXIX.

FROM dim, unbrageous forests, blindly trod,
From splendent peaks and bosky everglade;
Abysmal paths where, shrinking and afraid,
My steps have faltered on the way to God;
Some gem or rose, the gift of fire or clod,
Some withered leaf a blighting frost hath laid,
Some blithsome song or vision undismayed,
My soul hath garnered from the sky or sod.
Belovéd, on thy tolerant heart I cast
My sheaves of good and evil, joy and tears,
To mourn no more an unrequited past,
To blame no more the sad, mysterious years
That taught me life, that led me by the hand
To thee, that I might love and understand.

XL.

GRAY cliffs beneath the moonlight—gray and old
As the torn water beating on the stone
For unknown ages, rising stark and lone
Against the winter landscape—you behold
Frail human lives that pass, as red and gold
Autumnal glory for an hour thrown
Above you—rose and harebell—beauty blown
To dust across Time's portal, grim and cold.
My Love, my Love, beneath the winter moon
Warm are your hands, tender your lips and eyes;
Clasp me the closer, as your love replies
To this wild heart that beats its summer noon
Against your breast, for this is love's full day;
The leaf, the rose, the harebell—where are they?

XLI.

I KNOW not neither do I care to guess

If thou art beautiful, if others see

A heaven in the smile that dawns for me.

I care no more what language shall confess

Thy love; for if in silence thou shouldst dress

Thy thought, interpreter I still should be

And know love's meaning—know the melody

That with a broken lute thou wouldst express.

There is a loving language in thine eyes

To tell the coming nearer of my feet;

Thy blood beats faster; I am over-wise

With ancient lore unutterably sweet;

I wrote this once. Now thou hast gone before.

I see thy face, I hear thy voice no more.

XLII.

WE used to linger in the after-glow
And watch the cottage windows flash and gleam
Across the water, hand in hand to dream
Of winding roads where sometime we would go
Climbing to find a house that we should know
Our own, hidden behind some flowery tree,
And draw the latch, be happy and care-free,
And build our fire and tend and love it so!
Bright falls the sunset over hill and shore,
Upstairs a grave so very far away.
I dream, I watch, alone forevermore.
Yet as I dream I seem to hear you say,
"I'll seek the heavenly roadways till you come
To find our little house, then call you home."

XLIII.

SOFT autumn winds that sway the goldenrod,
Go seek for him upon the lonely hill;
Look for him in the glen; beside the rill;
The grass still bends where his light footstep trod.
Gray clouds so high in heaven, dost seek his face
Afar, mid thronging city-thoroughfare?
Too well I know thou canst not find him there.
To match my grief, rain down thy tears through space.
Where is he who was yesterday mine own?
Where does he hide himself on land or sea?
What pain restrains him, what great joys beguile?
I know he would not tarry long from me.
Does he not know I am bereft—alone?
Does he not know I weep and try to smile?

XLIV.

SHEER from the water's edge the great cliffs rise
Jagged and broken, holding o'er the sands
The giant hemlocks; in their hollow hands
Autumnal glory; all the sweet surprise
Of briers, incarnadined, and starry eyes
Of asters. Vivid in October sun,
Down their scarred sides the bleeding woodbines run,
As flows the life-stream when a warrior dies.
I watch them darken as the sunsets fade,
I dream beside them as we dreamed of yore,
O my beloved, who return'st no more
To limpid lake, to glen and forest glade!
Across my life, broken and gray with pain,
Creep memories of thee—Love's crimson stain.

XLV.

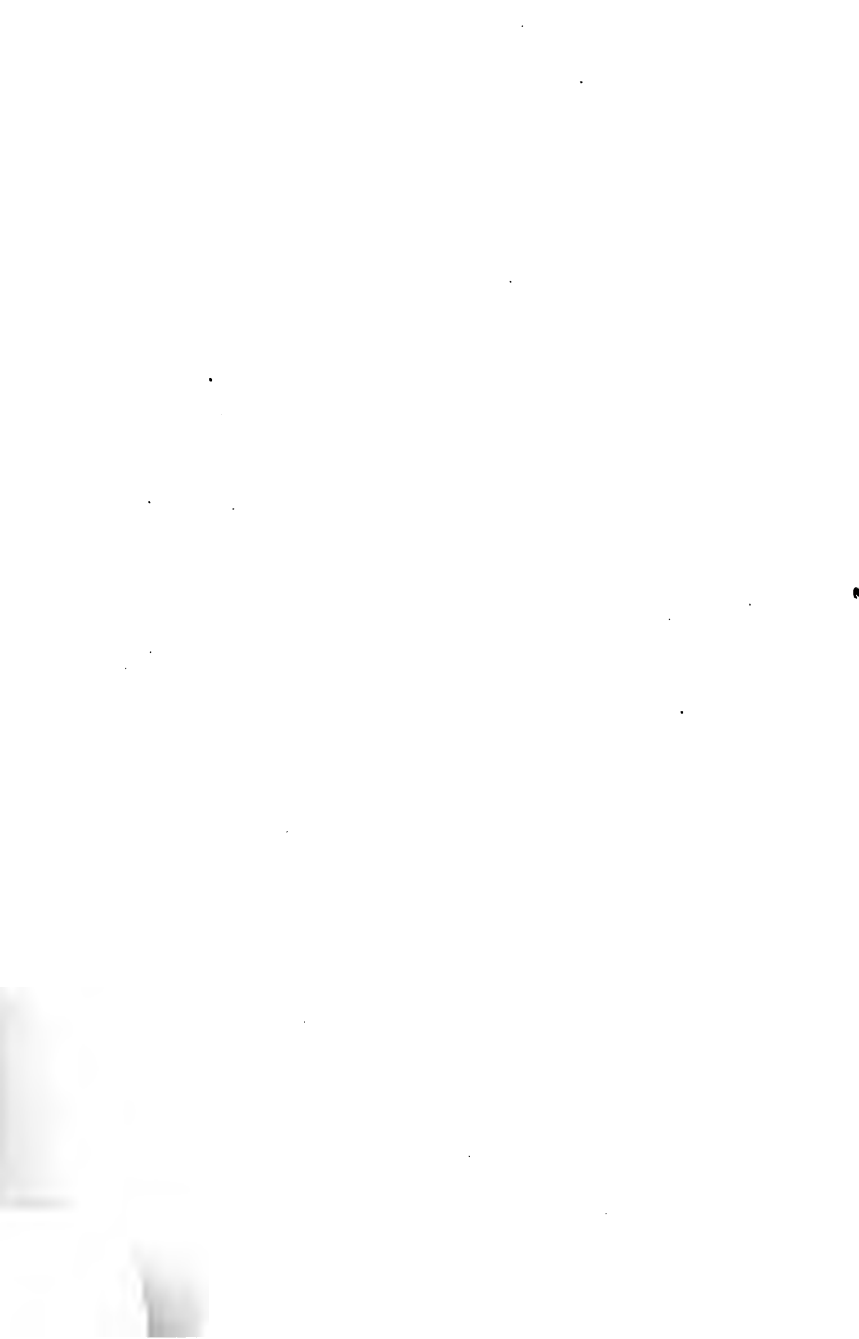
HOW dear the gift of thy quiescent eyes—
Twin lakes when autumn's brooding heavens are
gray.

The fires of precious stones and textiles gay
From oriental looms, big bales of price
From desert caravans, hold less surprise
Than what my life discovers day by day
In thine—laughter, the power to weep and pray,
And peaceful sleep beneath the star-lit skies.
I was so sad before you came to me;
Earth's beauty stung me like a lash. The dream
Vanished and left me old. A new ideal
Now springs to meet me—onward leads the gleam.
Onward, belovéd! Onward to the real!
Thou hast given me back myself in love of thee.

XLVI.

THINE arms about me and thy breath with mine
Mingled in kisses deep; one body we,
One longing, one perfected ecstasy
Of ravishing joy. By every seal and sign,
By every thrilling drop of passion's wine,
I claim thee who art more than life to me.
Come to me! Come! I hold all time as fee
To that one instant that remakes me thine.
It is so still and lonely and the snow
Covers so many graves! We are apart,
And far, faint footfalls of the years move slow
Between us. All my vibrant longings grow
To ghostly shapes. Come, wheresoe'er thou art,
Come, let me rest, then die upon thy heart.

SAMSARA SONNETS



SAMSARA SONNETS

I.

WHEN I was flower I know not—this I know,
 Among my sister flowers once was I.
When I was bird I care not—yet I fly
In restlessness before the threatened snow,
Sensing a wingéd life of long ago.
Steeped in Nepenthe, jocundly I lie
Beneath the azure or the starry sky,
And hear the earthworms creep, the grasses grow.
A myriad wild, sweet lives our lives enfold;
Dim, unremembered raptures, fear and wrong,
Pulse through the heart, as from a broken string
Sobs out some snatch of old, melodious song;
And in thine eyes, deep searching, I behold
Lost loves of shell and flower, claw and wing.

II.

IN ancient jungle you and I were one;
I know the pendant mosses; shadows deep
Reaching into the matted grass whence creep
Vague recollections of a blood-red sun
That waked us when our night of joy was done.
Your eyes that bend above me ever keep
Their first hot hunger; where our pulses leap
The scorching flame-breaths of the jungle run.
I, who have loved you by long right of these,
Lie in your arms a-tremble with the shame
Of primal passion only you can ease.
O love me, love me! till the soul's increase
Lends sanctity to that primeval flame,
And lure of thee kindles the shrine of peace.

III.

THE curtains of forgetfulness uproll,
Disclosing eastern courts of long ago;
Walled gates beneath the palms where fountains flow,
And swarthy slaves present a brimming bowl.
Exultant over all, a woman's soul
Effused in song, as pulsing to and fro
Flash bare brown feet, with ankle-rings aglow,
Before the king, upglancing from a scroll.
Phantasm of a pre-existent day!
Attenuated sounds from world's afar,
The city's noises into silence die.
Recedes the present—here the far-away;
We own no past but were as now we are!
Thou gracious king—the singing woman I.

IV.

DID Morpheus lead me where the temples rise
Above the circus, at Apollo's shrine?
Dimly I sense the lamp, the wreathes, the wine;
Faintly I hear the penitential sighs.
Ascending from the circus, hark! the cries
Of mortal conflict, and I read the sign
Of the averted thumb and answer, "Mine
The life;—a vestal." Into silence dies
The frozen throng as I, in virgin white,
With hair unbound and bare of arm and feet,
Receive thee cringing, trembling as a child,
Give thee to life and freedom, love and light,
Pay with my life for shrine and lamp defiled,
And learn that sacrifice for love is sweet.

V.

I HALF remember—lo! the fight was done,
The ranks swept down, the conquering host sped by
Triumphant, with acclaim and bugle-cry.
Through stench of carnage, in the fading sun,
I stoop and view the corpses, one by one,
Each ghastly form, each mangled face I try.
I wipe the dampness from me and descry
’Tis blood of men—grim price of conquest won.
Then in the crimson horror, cries of woe
And madness all about me, thee I saw
And bore upon my woman shoulder—so
Aeneas bore his father from the war.
Then silence all about us, and afar
Shining, as now it shines, the evening star.

VI.

AMID the greenness of the English yew
Once dawned my star. Oh, merrily I play
Among the pleachéd gardens, day by day,
Life one glad song, with comrades leal and true.
Then came the pageant of the court, to view
Our village festival. I ran away
And followed to the tourney. Prancing gay,
Your charger came, your hand the falchion drew.
I dashed along the lists and called aloud,
"Wear these my colors," threw my silken glove
Along your pommel. O'er the bantering crowd
Rippled a sea of mirth. Then the queen bowed,
Took me to be her tiring-maid and wove
About my life its web of woe and love.

VII.

I have a sense of ivied towers that lean,
Archaic sentinels, where some great sea
Pleading in sibilant insistency,
Chants of old wars and tempests that have been.
Across the moonlit lawn I pass between
The tall box-hedge and ghost of ilex tree,
When suddenly I come on her and thee—
Thee, my belovèd—her, my liege, my queen.
Standing tranfixed with horror, I thy bride,
Forget my honor and my country's pride.
"Traitor," I call, "Traitor" the echoes sigh.
Then comes the arméd guard, the clang, the cry,
And thy swift sword that makes me understand
E'en death is sweet if given by thy hand.

VIII.

DRIFTING in flake-like silence comes the past;
Phantoms from other lives that cheat the brain;
Fleeing like leaves before a hurricane,
Or mirage on a lurid sunset cast.
Star-mist from interstellar spaces vast
With gloom; an echo from forgotten pain;
A rainbow bridge; a glinting cobweb chain;
A blazing meteor in a whirlpool cast.
Memory?—as to a spoken word a sigh;
Vision?—as to the sun a shooting star;
The scent of roses when no flower is nigh;
Music from lips that have been dust for long—
So are these scenes from lives remote and far,
Yet real, as life is real, as love is strong.

IX.

WHEN down a dull brick wall the sunbeams flow,
A fatuous rapture fills my eager soul,
Vibrant as that which the majestic roll
Of ocean brings me, or the trackless snow,
The arch of rain, the morning star, or glow
Of sunset. Thus the spirit asketh toll
Of the insentient; rounds a perfect whole
From smallest arc, by vision swift to know
Her bliss fordoomed, her transports ages old.
For hers are curious racial memories grown
Visible for an instant, joys once ours
When we were one with trees and vines and flowers.
The sense of beauty makes the spirit bold
To know what was, is, and shall be our own.

X.

WHEN soul and sense have suffered all they may,
When this frail form, pulsating 'neath its load,
Has fallen senseless, prostrate in the road
Whereon youth's eager feet are swift to stray;
When I have wandered from the beaten way
And dumb and blind with anguish sunken down,
A ridicule, a jest, for fool and clown,
Who thought me flame and grinned to find me clay;
When I am broken and can bear no more,
What wilt thou have of me, Master Divine?
'Twas thus I questioned, and a passing breath
From lands remote, from alien sea and shore,
Whispered of other worlds of palm and pine,
Planets in pathless spaces, love, and death.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS



DESTINY

HIDDEN where lambent morning's crimson dips
 To calm cerulean sea; beyond the glow
 Of sunset; in the polar ice and snow;
 Or where the languorous wave of ocean lips
 The coral reef, and zephyr's finger tips
 The honeyed citrus flowers to and fro;
 That which is thine thy presence waits to know,
 Though on the path thereto thy weakness slips.
 I am the power that bespoke the dawn,
 Aeons ago called forth the twilight star,
 Whose love of man makes love in man divine.
 I mark thy way. From sight and sound withdrawn
 I rule the universe. No lock nor bar
 Shall keep from thee that which I count as thine.

PRAYER

THE gifts of God are mightier than our due;
Earth yields more beauty than our eyes behold,
More service than our slothful hands may mould
To fitting form; love—and we are untrue;
Faith—we are doubters. But a leaf of rue
Or drop of myrrh, and we who were so bold
In joy sink into tears. Ask not—He doth withhold
No blessing it were best the spirit knew.
When thou must pray, pray thankfully and long,
As the earth prays in flowers, as the sea
Offers its tides, the bird its matin song.
And for thy need of dower from above
Pray that God's spirit may descend on thee
And consecrate thy life to perfect love.

THE LETTER

YOUR letter came. I took it where we stood
One supreme moment, loving, unafraid,
And placed it gently in the sun-flecked shade,
Where the majestic hemlocks lean and brood.
Stealing through space, as fitful as your mood,
A wandering, light-foot, wanton breeze essayed
To lift the pages—then, as if gainsaid
By the cold words, fled sighing through the wood.
I lit a flame and as the letter blazed
The fair moss scorched and shriveled in my view.
Our words of breath are like the wind that raised
The paper and let fall again—but true
As searing flame, sharp arrow, flashing sword,
Falleth upon the heart the written word.

FOREVER AND FOREVER

DUMBLY on Memnon's lips the red suns rise;
Olympia's oracle, her games, her show,
Are dust the wanton winds of summer strow;
The shrines, once red with Druid sacrifice,
Now herder's pasture, petty chieftain's prize,
Are green with grass or white with drifting snow.
Dodona's murmurous oaks unheeded grow;
'Neath shattered stones the Delphic sibyl lies.
Still waits the race beneath a shading hand
Some revelation from Immensity,
Utters the prayers it may not understand,
Uprears its fanes to any gods that be;
And sows and reaps life's narrow strip of land
Reaching its shining length from sea to sea.

THE CATHEDRAL

WHY seeks the soul the dim cathedral aisle,
Where vibrant organ beats upon the shore,
Of silence, where sonorous voices soar
Toward the Creator, as some bird, the while
It sings, rises into the blue? 'Neath smile
Of pictured saint, where stained windows pour
An irised flood on tessellated floor,
One need not seek God's power to reconcile.
From lonely chamber, where the April sun
Enters with kindly hint of flower and bird,
My spirit floods abroad in swift surprise
To nature's vast cathedral, where at one
With her the surging song of life is heard,
And Christ in man calleth for sacrifice.

SLEEP

COME hither, kindly shepherdess of dreams,
Thy wayward, restless, wandering little sheep,
Astray on alien bracken, moor and steep,
Sicken for native heath and homey streams.
Thine all-persuasive eyes, within whose beams
Dear memories dwell, are passionless and deep,
Pools of repose, where tranquil shadows creep
And active life, inverted, sways and gleams.
Conduct to somnolent green pastures, where
I linger with the loved of other years,
Beside still waters; let me gather there
The healing herbs that ease the sting of tears;
Touch of dear hands and lips—the smiling eyes
That once were mine; that now are Paradise.

THE POET

WHO would become the poet of man must tread
Life's unilluminated silences alone,
Must strike the living spring within the stone,
And beg from heart to heart the spirit's bread.
When he has put from sight his dearest dead,
His love of life and self-hood overthrown;
When trembling faith, groping the vast unknown,
Returns unreconciled, un comforted;
When friends depart, yea, when his own love fails
And leaves him desolate, can he conceal
His penury, his joy in God reveal,
Trust in the spirit when the sense assails;
Then let him sing or let him silent keep,
The hearts of men respond—deep unto deep.

LOST DREAMS

WHERE are the palaces we trod? Swift gleam
Of opalescent sea—war, love, or prayer?
The kingdom to be won? The pearl to wear?
Enticing music—viol, harp, or stream?
Often amid this seething world I seem
Haunted by some fine rapture, half despair;
I clasp it as it vanishes in air—
Phantasmal vapor—echo of a dream.
As to the far-off city of delight
We take the spirit's solitary way,
Bearing life's crown of thorns or wreath of flowers,
Illusive beauty flashes on the sight.
O eyes! O hands! Elysium for a day!
O high, lost dreams that never may be ours!

THE CLOUD

BEHOLD yon sun-emblazoned cloud unfurled
Against the interminable vastness of the blue—
Ethereal, castellated walls we knew
In happy vision when youth ruled the world.
Updrifting to the zenith, light-empearled,
It sinks in tattered glory, winds that blew
From deep to deep enticing it from view—
Illusive, misty masses, starward hurled.
So moves the soul across vague, unknown space
From vastness unto vastness, dowered with light.
The sport of storm, companioned by the sun,
Brought into being in some far, high place,
Gray with big rain of tears: so brief, so bright!
Vanished, forgotten, when its course is run.

THE PRESENT

I WOULD be true to high desires that lead
My soul today. As evening color dies
In quivering opalescence from the skies,
Old faith, old standards, antiquated creed,
Go down before the eager present's need;
New lights appear as holy stars arise;
Vast planets, mightier than our own, surprise
The soul that from its watchtower taketh heed.
What matter though the heart forsakes the way
The past appointed, the old gods lie dead,
'Mid alters sunken in the dank and dew?
Should some false witch-fire lead the steps astray,
Mocking God's lamps of glory overhead,
Unto the present would I still be true.

IMPRISONED

LOOSE me, persuasive, haunting breath of May,
Loose me from memory and let me go;
The fruit tree petals drift, a fragrant snow;
I would be wanton and care-free as they—
Free from regret, released from yesterday.
In thy florescence of delight, bestow
Primeval rapture; let my spirit know
The full fruition of each vivid day.
We are the past, our vital root is set
In the invisible whose pregnant soil
Enfolds a harvest cankerous regret
Or chilling sorrow may delay or spoil.
The flowers are abloom, the birds a-wing:
Make me content with present joy, O Spring!

THE EMPTY ROOM

O EMPTY, silent room, vacant as space!
Through the drawn shades gleam little threads of
light,
Like stars that may not enter here at night;
The mirror answers no beloved face.
Dear, vanished feet have left no hurried trace
On the smooth floor. The pillows, stark and white,
Rise up like tombstones and the air is blight.
Turn the compellent key and leave the place.
Descend, O spirit of the vast unknown!
Thou tenderness that is the brooding dove,
The crooning mother—mighty powers that move
Through formless voids big with portentous glooms,
Brood o'er the silence whence the light has flown
And make thy presence felt in vacuous rooms.

WITHHOLDING

FAIR fruit tree, in half-opened blossoms dressed,
Why shut thy beauty in its green retreat?
Unfold thy petals, make our joy complete;
Like white communicant, all unconfessed
Waiting beside the alter, half-expressed
Thy purposes of bloom; again repeat
Thine age-old miracle of life and cheat
The chilly winds that have thy flowers suppressed.
Low to my heart the answer of the tree
Breathes forth: "My blossoms wait no fuller sun,
No warmer air, but the knight-errant bee,
My pollen grains to scatter, one by one,
From flower to flower: no life, however sweet,
Without its otherself is all-complete."

THE DOWNY OWL

THE downy owl, gray banshee of the night,
Weaving his lilt of sorrow to and fro
In the dim dawning, ere the crimson glow
Leads lusty day across the fields of light,
Awakes me with his melancholy rite,
His tremulous adagio, sweet and low,
As one who mourns a passion old as woe,
Or would too late a wounded love requite.
Hark how he whimpers in the brooding gloom,
Mocking lost joy—the still, forsaken room,
The unpressed pillow where no dear head lies!
Gray banshee owl, prophet of morning skies,
Proclaim the light, and let lost rapture be
One with the forest's gloom and mystery.

IN THE DUNDEE CEMETERY

THE maple's lovely garments disappear,
Naked and virginal the branches rise
Above a lonely, new-made grave where lies
A cast-off raiment once so bright, so dear.
Hold me a little closer, draw more near
And take my hand and look into my eyes.
Should the grim angel take us by surprise
Before we meet again, we will not fear.
How still he lies whom restlessness and care,
Ambition, fear, hate, love, once made a man!
Changed to cool mould, to illimitable air,
Incorporate with earth's diurnal plan.
To the stripped tree, the naked soul, belong
Immortal Springs of blossom, love and song.

THE UNFAMILIAR

A CROSS the wind-swept, open country ways,
Immortal Spring, her grass-green robes a-blow,
Invites the flowers to rise, the streams to flow.
Like sunset seen through intervening haze,
Sturdy forsythea's yellow, fringed sprays
And maples' crimson tops gleam through the snow.
In forests where I wandered long ago
Arbutus stars illumine the bosky ways.
Yet is the dear familiar strange today.
An unknown flora greets me, for I bring
New light to see by, as life slips away,
Whereby each blade of grass, each opening flower,
Reveals the beauty of primeval Spring.

OBLITERATION

THE snow envelopes the insensate land,
Like petals shaken from emblossomed tree;
Like ships that tack across a vaporous sea,
It zig-zags through the air on every hand.
Before ice-fretted windowpane I stand,
The willing thrall of witching memory,
Again sequestered forest aisles with thee
Treading. How our snow-laden trees must stand
Ghostly and stark—green vistas dimmed away
Under the whirling whiteness. Thus it seems
Time covers every vestige of today.
The blanchéd tears fall; the loving dreamer dreams;
But efflorescence of delight must know
Obliterative whiteness—like the snow.

GOD'S CHILD

PURE love, the ages have thy name defiled
Since in the garden Adam was betrayed!
Polluted to a synonym for trade
In virtue; blackened, bartered and reviled
By priest and monk; imprisoned and exiled
By law and creed; exchanged for title; made
The slave of passion. Ingenuous maid,
From endless time earth's one immortal child!
Pure vestal of the lamp that burns within
Upon the altar of the living God;
Strong, primal cause whereby insensate clod
Starts heavenward; thou, incapable of sin,
Lend me thy wings and with me, as I rise,
Bear up all those I love toward Paradise.

IGNATONG'S MUMMY

IMMORTAL dust that once was Egypt's king;
Great mummied Pharaoh wound in threads of gold;
Three thousand years the desert sands have rolled
Above thy grave, three thousand years the Spring
Has heard the cuckoo in the ilex sing.
Hark, like its song thy living faith retold
By priest and poet, in song and saga old,
Across the ages softly echoing!
Palace and tomb and temple overthrown,
Still stand thy witness to the living God,
Whose name thy cunning slaves engraved on stone
In deathless hymns. Those vandal hordes that trod
Thy ravished kingdom have for long been blown
Dust of the desert—nameless and unknown.

NIGHT IN THE CITY

THINK not deep silence haunts the country's way
At night. There crooning sounds invite the feet
To fields and forest pathway, flower-sweet.
There strums the lake upon its shingle gray;
There move the fingers of the breeze at play
On piney harpstrings; there, in cool retreat,
A little brook in eager haste to meet
The ocean, sings of uplands, flower-gay.
In haunts of man is silence surest found
When man has vanished. Silence like a shroud
Wraps the great city nightly, round and round.
Withdraw the pulse-beat of its fevered crowd,
A sluggish stream its myriad arteries flow—
Grim corpse with guarding candles, row on row.

THE GHOST IN THE WORKSHOP

DAY'S brilliant shuttle casts its threads afar
Like wind-whipped banners streaming up the skies.
As tinsel, woven in regal tapestries,
Shimmers the blessing of the evening star.
Descending shadows weary hands debar
From labor. Earth's great spindle silent lies.
Intrusive ghost, with deep, unfathomed eyes,
From haunts where buried pain and passion are,
Hast come to see how constantly I weave
Thine image in life's fabric? The dear dead
Are kinder. Living, breathing, wherefore tread
Mine ancient workshop that I may not leave,
Where faithful at life's loom from day to day
I weave love's broken thread as best I may?

THERE IS A HAPPINESS

THERE is a happiness that dares to creep
Past smiles and laughter to the inner shrine,
Where dwell the hidden gods, those powers divine,
Wizards of dreams we dream and tears we weep.
Amid dim forest ways where cataracts leap
Upon the heights, beneath the murmurous pine,
Sight of a flower, or sudden, vivid line
Of autumn sunset—lo! the passions sweep
Past joy to sorrow—rapture stung to tears.
My memories of thee are bliss so keen
The heart would break with joy, but for such sting.
I weep while harking back across the years
To ecstasy of hours that have been.
So weeps Egeria—remembering.

DAY

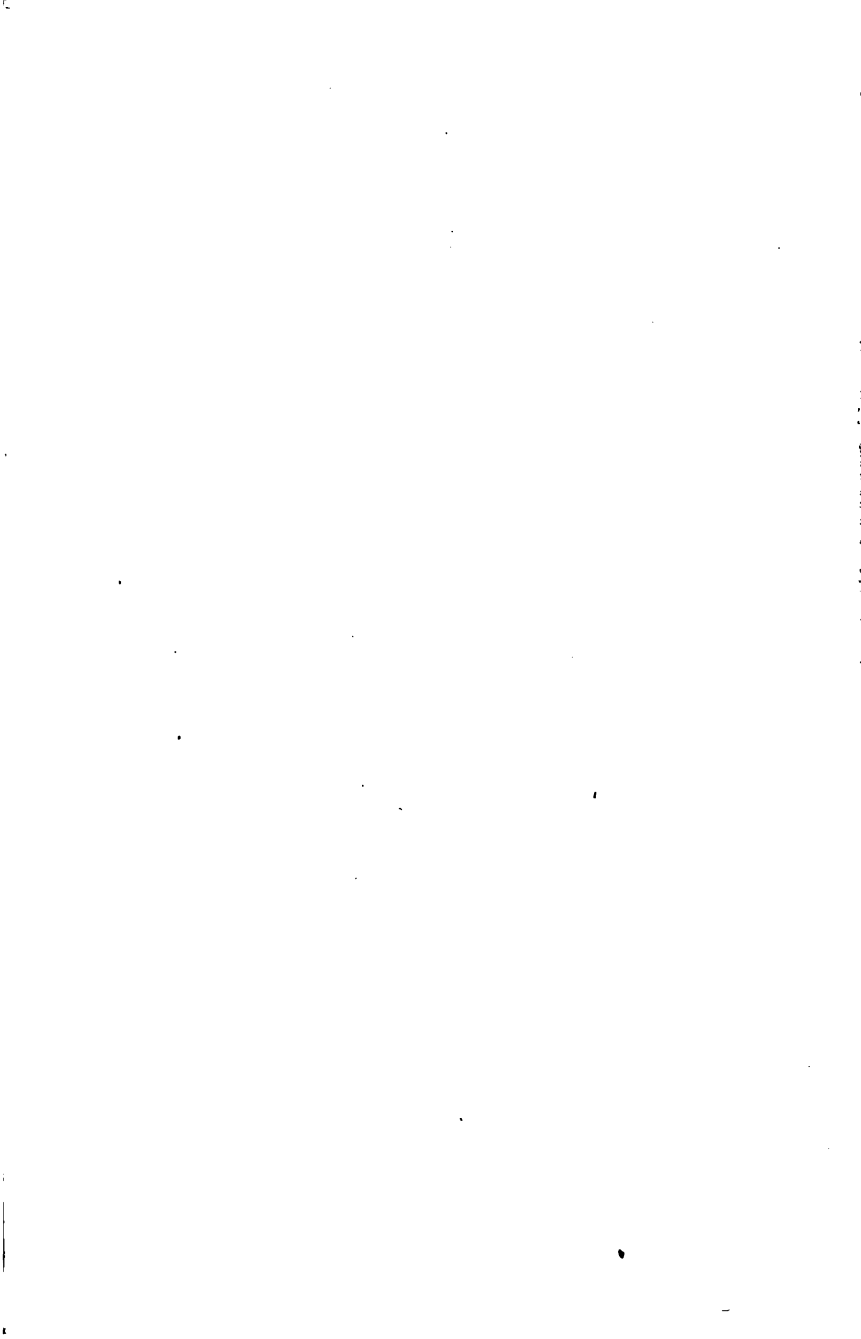
A PALMER from the orient, staff in hand,
Offers his beggar-bowl on bended knee,
With tales of enterprise beguileth me—
Story and legend of a better land.
He speaks a language many understand,
Illusive promises of good to be,
Entreateth me to follow, to be free,
Yet lays upon me stripe and bar and band.
O palmer from the east, when tales are told
And full obeisance made and prayer complete,
Don thy gray cowl, the hour is growing late;
Accept my offering, a coin of gold
Minted within my heart; on reverent feet
Bear it to God beyond the sunset gate.

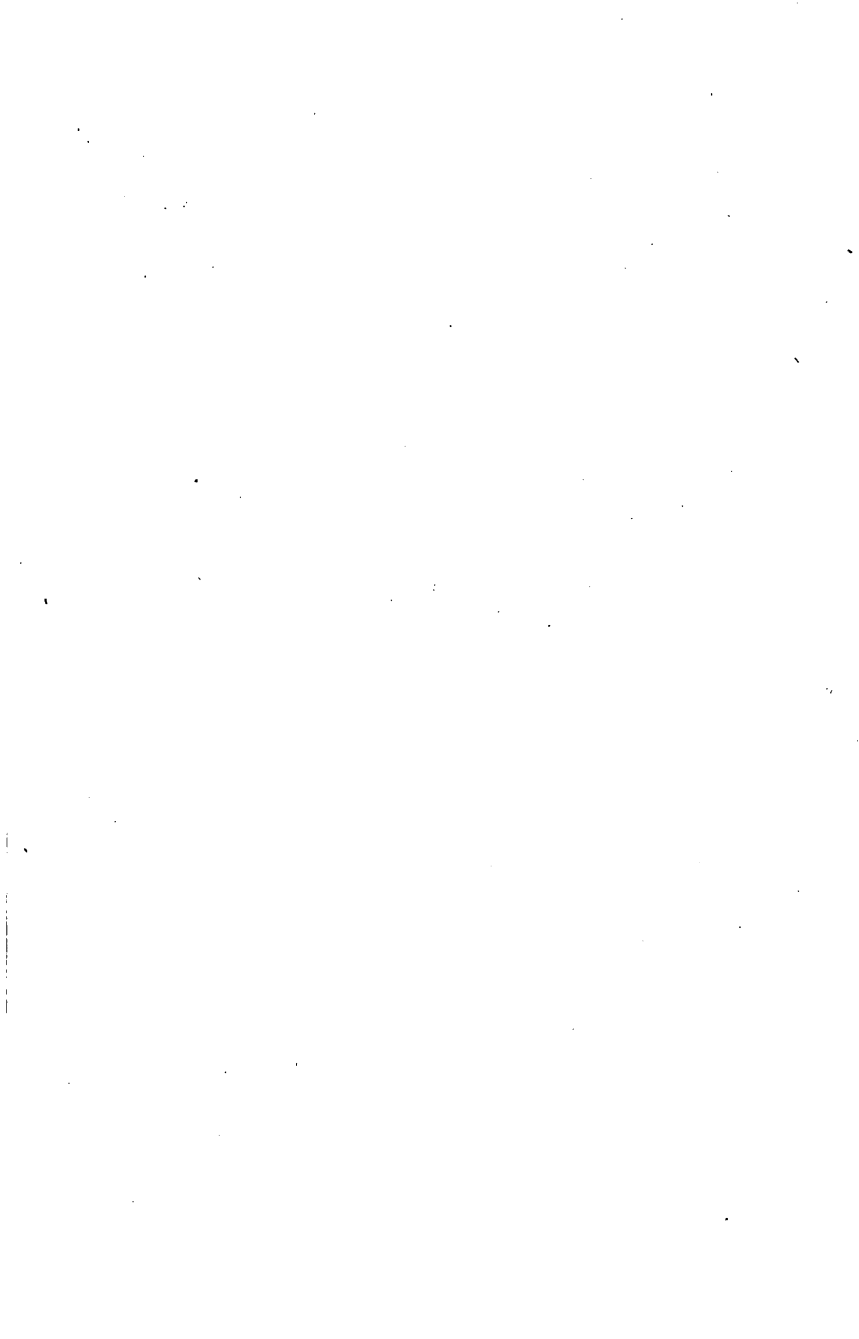
DESERTED

BENEATH the roof where love abode with me,
Through empty rooms a haunting echo falls;
Upon the rat-infested, crumbling walls
Hang shreds of tattered, worm-worn tapestry.
Scattered the ashes of the fire that we
Builded together, and the dark swift calls
From the forsaken chimney; look, how sprawls
The spider where our casement opened free.
I am alone! Why do I stay to hear
The dreary owl, to note through broken glass
The falling rain, the eddy of dead leaves
Round this abandoned mansion once so dear?
God give me strength to close the door and pass
Beneath the grinning gargoyles on the eaves.

THE COLOR GRAY

I FIND thee in illusive mists that sweep
Their Quaker skirts on bright autumnal hill;
In rocky glen whose melancholy rill
Slips fretfully adown the slaty steep
Of the great fall, to lie in pools asleep,
Dreaming of upland vales remote and still;
In twilight spaces that the calm stars fill;
In crag-hung, crescent beach where billows leap.
Thine are the lichens, lovers of the shade;
And thine the crooning dove, the thrush's breast,
The silent wing on which the shy owl flies.
All colors blend to form thee, subtly made;
Of every hue I love thy quiet best,
Fabric of night and dreams and gentle eyes.





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